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"THE BEACH HAT," BY ROBERT HENRI, ACQUIRED FOR THE PERMANENT
COLLECTION FROM CITY APPROPRIATION.

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PAINTINGS BY ROBERT HENRI

The purchase of three canvases by Robert Henri, the American artist, in addition to the one of "*The Irish Guide*" already in the collection of the Institute through the loan of Miss Julia Peck, is somewhat in the nature of an adventure. Of course this may not be admitted by the Arts Commission, but I am sure it will ultimately reveal itself as such.

Only time can tell whether this forceful, virile painter has been overspecimened by this comparatively liberal investment in his works.

Henri is so interesting as a painter that he must compel the attention of all art authorities. He represents, in his absolute sureness and brilliancy of technique, his restlessness and constant experimentation, his freshness and modernity, the present-day American.

It is a good beginning to an education in art to stand before Henri's canvases and analyze them. Take the "*Beach Hat*," for instance. Note the flatness of the face obtained by the simplification of planes, the elimination of disturbing subsidiary tones. For Henri seldom yields to the strong temptation to make his forms too round by overmodelling. A great part of his effectiveness is due to this insistence upon flatness—to the reduction of objects to two main, instead of three or more, tones.

Note this also in the treatment of the coat—almost a solid, even tone of red with here and there a few dashing, masterly brush strokes to reveal the form and the shape. The hat and the shirtwaist are both handled in the sure, uncannily, clever manner of Henri's that almost defies imitation.

Finally, note how the whole figure is thrown up and out by the use of the dark blue note of the skirt. It is this that fixes the key of the picture, places the figure not only in relation to the frame but, as well, fixes its whole action.

Turning to the three-quarter nude of a young girl, one is immediately attracted by the background employed by Henri—shot with red and yellow and light greens and blues. How wonderfully it adds to the impression of glorious, golden maidenhood, setting off the purity and luminosity of the flesh.

Watch, too, how the artist loses and finds the outline of his figure as his line flows and ripples up and down the large canvas. Note the trick of the use of the right arm in full shadow to throw the body forward by contrast.

Here, too, we see how clean and simplified Henri keeps the whole front of the body. There is practically no attempt at subtleties and where they are introduced, when absolutely necessary, they always



"BOY WITH THE PLAID SCARF," BY ROBERT HENRI, ACQUIRED FOR THE PERMANENT COLLECTION FROM CITY APPROPRIATION.

remain modifications of the light plane instead of encroachments of the middle tone.

Having determined to paint an impression of maidenhood, Henri rightly concentrates by all his means on the slim, lithe, as yet

undeveloped, form of the girl. Note how, by a cursory treatment, he has subordinated the head.

Watch, finally, the play of reflected light in the transparent shadows of this master craftsman.

·ERNEST HEITKAMP.